

Message Text

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PAGE 01 HALIFA 00081 281809Z

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 H-02 CIAE-00

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TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, CA

SUBJECT: TRUDEAU VISIT TO WASHINGTON: MEDIA

COVERAGE NO 5

REF: HALIFAX 0078

1. FEB 26 HALIFAX "MAIL-STAR" CARRIES FRONT PAGE ARTICLE, "TRUDEAU S VISIT WAS DOWNPLAYED", BY REPORTER PETER MEERBURG. MEERBURG BEATS OLD HORSE OF U S IGNORANCE OF AND LACK OF INTEREST IN CANADA. HE DECRIES U S PRESS AND BROADCAST MEDIA S "SUPERFICIAL" COVERAGE OF TRUDEAU VISIT CITING ATTENTION GIVEN TO MRS TRUDEAUS WARDROBEN MENU AND GUEST LIST FOR STATE DINNERS, AND TRUDEAU S CONVERSATIONS WITH MOVIE STARS. HE NOTES SMALL NUMBER OF SENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN WHO ATTENDED SPEECH BEFORE CONGRESS, BACKPAGE PLACEMENT OF ARTICLES ON VISIT IN "NEW YORK TIMES" AND "WASHINGTON POST", AND FOCUS OF U S REPORTERS QUESTIONING ON U S DOMESTIC RELATED TOPICS AT TRUDEAU PRESS CONFERENCE.

2. A SECOND MEERBURG BY-LINE STORY, "WASHINGTON CAMPAIGN KICKOFF?" APPEARS ON PAPER S OPINION PAGE. MEERBURG ATTEMPTS ANALYSIS ON TRUDEAUS SPEECH BEFORE U S CONGRESS AND ITS EFFECT ON TRUDEAU S UNCLASSIFIED

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POLITICAL FURTUNES. MEERBURG SAYS "ADDRESS TO CONGRESS ... ACHIEVED ITS SHORT TERM OBJECTIVE OF TELLING THE AMERICANS THAT WE LOVE THEM, AND THAT OUR COUNTRY IS NOT, RENE LEVESQUE NOTWITHSTANDING, GOING TO HELL IN A HANDBASKET. BUT LIKE CHINESE FOOD, THE EQUESTION IS WHETHER THE SPEECH WILL HAVE LASTING EFFECT". MEERBURG THINKS PRIME MINISTER HAS IMPROVED POPULARITY AND

REASSERTED LEADERSHIP WITH SPEECH. HE SPECULATES THAT TRUDEAU MAY CALL ELECTION TO CAPITALIZE ON FAVORABLE UPSURGE TOWARDS HIM.

3. SAME EDITION OF PAPER CARRIES ANNOUNCEMENT THAT MEERBURG HAS BEEN PROMOTED TO POSITION AS CANADIAN AFFAIRS EDITOR, JOB JUST VACATED BY HAROLD SHEA WITH HIS PROMOTION TO BECOME EDITOR-IN-CHIEF.

4. COMMENT: WE SEE MEERBURG POSSIBLY TRYING TO GROW INTO HIS NEW JOB WITH HIS FIRST "THINK PIECES". THE NOSE-OUT-OF-JOINT STORY ON U S COVERAGE OF TRUDEAU VISIT IS A POT BOILER AND AT VARIANCE WITH COVERAGE GIVEN VISIT TO DATE IN HALIFAX PAPERS. THE SECOND STORY, SPECULATING ON FEDERAL ELECTIONS, IS MORE INTERESTING BUT IN OUR OPINION PRETTY FARFETCHED. WHILE PRIME MINISTER HAS IMPROVED HIS POSITION WITH WASHINGTON VISIT, HE IS STILL FAR TOO BESET BY PROBLEMS, AND NOT JUST QUEBEC, TO RISK FACING AN ELECTION IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

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Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
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